

I, John Steinert, wish to submit the following testimony in support of HB 6685 Shared Parenting.

My legal separation extended from Dec. 2007 through the divorce in 2011. Both during the separation and post-divorce, despite repeated and very expensive motions and court appearances, the court did nothing to enforce my visitation rights with either of my children. Despite very specific language about the activities in which I was to be included, the times etc., the court would not enforce my visitation rights or the rights of any grandparents or other family members. All relatives and especially I was prevented from seeing my children and even conversing with them. There has never been any evidence provided as to why this would be the case. There is substantial evidence that my ex-spouse has created false beliefs in both children's minds and in the minds of other parties -- she has written disparaging falsehoods to schools, to friends and to other organizations. She has intercepted e-mails to each child. This is evidence that she has created an alienating environment from which the children have no escape because they have no other inputs other than hers. The children have no contact with any family members on either side of the family. Their only contact is with their mother. I repeat: the mother has separated the children from their father and all living relatives on both sides of the family. There is ample evidence of the psychological damage this has caused the children: They are essentially orphans except for their mother. They have no family support network as no one can contact them. This situation likely would not have arisen had the court supported and enforced shared visitation during separation and post divorce as the children would have been able to see other sides to the story and would have had access to the nurturing and support of their father and other family members on both sides of the family -- their many cousins, aunts, uncles and both sets of grandparent. For the health and welfare of children, I strongly recommend that the court consider enforcing visitation rights in the future to balance care-giving, to support family networks and to prevent the permanent alienation of children from their extended families by one parent.

Sincerely,
John Steinert

John Steinert
Principal
P.O. Box 5121
Westport, CT 06881